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Information/Action

Educator Preparation Committee

Subject Matter Competency for Integrated Undergraduate Teacher Preparation Programs

Executive Summary: This agenda item provides information on when candidates must demonstrate subject matter competency and asks the Commission for direction on this topic related to integrated undergraduate teacher preparation programs.

Policy Question: When should candidates in integrated undergraduate teacher preparation programs be required to demonstrate competency in subject matter to be eligible to student teach?

Recommended Action: Staff seeks feedback on this topic.

Presenter: Teri Clark, Director, Professional Services Division

Strategic Plan Goal

II. Program Quality and Accountability

- a) Develop and maintain rigorous, meaningful, and relevant standards that drive program quality and effectiveness for the preparation of the education workforce and are responsive to the needs of California's diverse student population.

December 2016

Subject Matter Competency for Integrated Undergraduate Teacher Preparation Programs

Introduction

This agenda item provides an overview of current requirements related to subject matter competency to help inform the Commission's discussion of what candidates in an integrated undergraduate teacher preparation program would need to do to meet the subject matter competency requirement prior to student teaching.

In traditional student teaching teacher preparation programs, candidates must meet the subject matter competency requirement prior to student teaching. These candidates would typically have completed their undergraduate subject matter preparation prior to enrolling in the graduate level teacher preparation program. However, in an integrated undergraduate program, candidates are expected to have early, extensive field experiences while still undergraduates and may not yet have completed all relevant subject matter coursework and preparation. (Note: as these types of programs have developed over time, the term "Integrated" has come to be preferred over the term "Blended" to refer to a program that combines subject matter preparation with pedagogical preparation in a single or unified approach for candidates.)

The Commission is asked to discuss what integrated undergraduate program candidates should be required to complete in terms of subject matter preparation and demonstrated subject matter competency in order to be eligible (a) to participate fully in early classroom-based field and clinical experiences, and (b) to begin solo teaching.

Background

At the direction of the legislature, the Commission established the requirements that a candidate must satisfy prior to being recommended for a Preliminary teaching credential, including demonstration of subject matter competency. In addition, each candidate must verify that he/she has met the basic skills requirement, holds a bachelor's degree, has met the U.S. Constitution requirement, and completed a teacher preparation program, including passing a Commission-approved Teaching Performance Assessment (TPA).

The 2016-17 state budget provided \$10 million to the Commission to support the planning of new undergraduate integrated teacher preparation programs and/or to transition a current five-year integrated teacher preparation program to a four-year program. The funds are being awarded to eligible institutions through a competitive bidding process; each grant may be funded up to \$250,000. For an institution to offer an undergraduate integrated teacher preparation program, the program design must allow the candidate to earn both the degree and the credential in four years, or if there is a second credential or authorization, the first

degree and credential must be earned within four years and the second credential or authorization in an additional half-year. As with all teacher preparation programs, regardless of program design, enrolled candidates must complete clinical practice experiences, including student teaching. The Commission requires candidates to be subject matter competent before they begin student teaching, and since candidates in integrated programs may not have yet fully completed their subject matter preparation, staff asks the Commission to discuss what might be a reasonable approach to resolve this situation. The Commission is asked to identify what the appropriate subject matter competency requirement should be for candidates in an integrated program so they will be eligible for early fieldwork, the range of clinical experiences and to student teach.

Pre-SB 2042 Subject Matter Requirements (up to 2001)

It may be helpful to the Commission's discussion to look at the history of the subject matter competency requirement for candidates. In the most recent prior program standards, candidates were required to have passed the subject matter examination or to have completed four-fifths of the subject matter preparation program prior to advancing to student teaching. The language from the prior standards is provided below:

Program Standard 8: Advancement to Daily Student Teaching Responsibilities

In each program, advancement to daily student teaching responsibilities is limited to candidates who are ready for such responsibilities, have demonstrated proficiency at basic academic skills, and have either (a) attained the Commission's standard for advancement on the relevant subject matter examination approved by the Commission, or (b) completed at least four-fifths of a program of subject matter preparation that waives this examination.

SB 2042 Subject Matter Requirements (2001-2016)

Currently, Preliminary Multiple and Single Subject (MS/SS) program-specific preconditions require that candidates satisfy the subject matter competency requirement prior to beginning student teaching or whole class instruction:

Preliminary MS/SS Program Precondition 10: Subject Matter Proficiency

The approved preliminary teacher preparation program sponsor determines that each candidate meets the subject matter requirement prior to student teaching, or, for intern candidates, before being given daily whole class instructional responsibilities in a K-12 school or before becoming the teacher of record in a K-12 school.

- For Multiple Subject programs (traditional, intern, and/or integrated), the candidate provides evidence of having passed the appropriate subject matter examination(s). *(When the regulatory process has been completed, Commission-approved subject matter preparation programs will also be able to verify subject matter competency.)*
- For Single Subject programs (traditional, intern, and/or integrated), the candidate provides evidence of having passed the appropriate subject matter

examination(s) or having completed the appropriate Commission-approved subject matter preparation program, or a course of study deemed equivalent by the program sponsor.

- For Single Subject integrated programs, the candidate provides evidence of having passed the appropriate subject matter examination(s), or having completed at least four-fifths (4/5) of the appropriate Commission-approved subject matter preparation program, or a course of study deemed equivalent by the program sponsor.

Early Fieldwork Experiences

An additional factor to consider is that beginning September 2017, Preliminary MS/SS program standards will require that candidates complete 600 hours of clinical practice across the arc of the program. This requirement has been defined as K-12 student contact hours where the focus is on instruction:

Program Standard 3A: Organization of Clinical Practice

The range of Clinical Practice experiences provided by the program includes supervised early field experiences, initial student teaching...and final student teaching. Student Teaching includes a minimum of four weeks of solo or co-teaching or its equivalent.

The program standards adopted in December 2015 do not contain language regarding candidates demonstrating subject matter competency prior to beginning student teaching or how much of the subject matter requirement candidates in integrated undergraduate programs need to have met to be ready for fieldwork and student teaching. The language of Precondition 10 provided on page 2 of this agenda item does not address integrated undergraduate programs for Multiple Subject candidates or the option that prospective Multiple Subject teachers may satisfy subject matter by completion of a Commission-approved subject matter program once the revised Title 5 regulations are operational.

Discussion

The Committee on Accreditation (Committee) was asked to discuss this topic at its November 2016 meeting. The recommendation from the Committee is that undergraduate integrated program candidates should: (a) be allowed to begin early field experiences prior to satisfying subject matter, (b) be supervised even more closely by the district employed supervisor and program supervisor for demonstration of appropriate content knowledge, and (c) to be required to satisfy the subject matter competency requirement before beginning the 100 hours of solo teaching.

Possible Revised Precondition Language:

Preliminary MS/SS Program Precondition 10: Subject Matter Proficiency

The approved preliminary teacher preparation program sponsor determines that each candidate meets the subject matter requirement prior to being given daily

whole class instructional responsibilities as a student teacher in a TK-12 school or before becoming the teacher of record as an intern in a TK-12 school.

- For Multiple and Single Subject programs (traditional and intern), the candidate provides evidence of having passed the appropriate subject matter examination(s) or having completed the appropriate Commission-approved subject matter preparation program, or a course of study deemed equivalent by the program sponsor.
- For integrated undergraduate programs, the candidate must be assessed by the program prior to beginning early field experiences. Candidates must be supervised for content knowledge during early field experiences. To allow the undergraduate integrated candidate to begin the 100 hours of solo teaching, each candidate must have satisfied subject matter or at a minimum completed four-fifths of the Commission-approved subject matter preparation program.

Staff seeks direction from the Commission regarding how best to address the development of subject matter competence in conjunction with field experience and student teaching requirements specifically for the integrated undergraduate teacher preparation programs. Staff will bring an agenda item to a future meeting with language for the Multiple and Single Subject Preconditions that addresses the Commission's direction.

Next Steps

Staff will take the next steps related to the satisfaction of subject matter by integrated undergraduate program candidates as directed by the Commission.